DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 271 905 EC 171 318

AUTHOR Bruni, Stephanie Leeds
TITLE The Class and Faye: Social Interaction of a Handicapped Child in an Integrated First Grade Class.
PUB DATE 82
NOTE 29p.; In: In the Mainstream: Case Studies of Integrated Education for Children with Disabilities, see EC 171 309.
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Downs Syndrome; *Interaction; *Mainstreaming; *Peer Relationship; Primary Education

ABSTRACT

One of a series of case studies on mainstreaming programs, the report describes an integrated first grade program. The physical setting of the school and the organization of the class are described along with the progress of a Down's Syndrome child who participates in a resource class. The following program aspects are addressed: classroom and seating arrangements, organization and activities, and teacher influence and interaction. The classroom's features of emphasis on peer help seeking and help giving are noted, despite the observation of a double standard of behavior. Examples of classroom observations are offered, and difficulties encountered by the Down's Syndrome child are noted, including negative encounters with her classmates. Suggestions to structure situations to promote interaction are noted. (CL)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)
This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

ED271905

The Class and Faye:
SOCIAL INTERACTION OF A HANDICAPPED CHILD IN AN INTEGRATED FIRST GRADE CLASS

Stephanie Leeds Bruni

EC17 131 8

This first grade class at Monroe Elementary School was not selected because it was nominated as exhibiting exemplary mainstreaming practices. In fact, the research for the case study presented here was completed before the other studies in this volume began. It was selected for in-depth observation for my dissertation research for several reasons. Preliminary observations indicated that the child with a disability that was in this class, Faye, experienced a very low level of peer interaction. In addition, Faye has Downs Syndrome. I was interested in how a child with a demonstrable difference would get on in a typical class. Finally, this class was the only first grade available to me for in-depth study. Because first grade is typically a child's first full day, intense school experience I wanted to understand more about this important grade.

A FIRST GRADE CLASS AT MONROE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

This first grade class at Monroe Elementary School was selected for in-depth observation for several reasons. Preliminary observations indicated that the handicapped child, Faye, experienced a very low level of peer interactions. In addition, Faye has Downs Syndrome. I was interested in how a child with a demonstrable difference would get on in a typical class. Finally, this class was the only first grade available to me for in-depth study. Because first grade is typically a child's first full day, intense school experience, I wanted to understand more about this important grade.

This case study describes the setting and its participants at Monroe. Of particular interest is the salient features of the teacher's influence on the nature and quality of peer interactions in general, and Faye's experiences in particular.

The School Itself

Monroe is one of seven elementary schools in a central school district located near Central City. It is situated in a residential area of a small suburb. The school building is a one-story red brick structure, which houses grades kindergarten through six. Behind the school is a very large field. Outdoor play equipment is situated on this field, close to the school building.

Class Participants and Organization

Teacher

Ms. Karen Fosse is the teacher. Ms. Fosse is a tall, slim, Caucasian woman about 36 years old. She has short, straight blonde hair, a long thin face, fair skin, and freckles. She speaks with a clear voice in a pleasant tone. She is usually well dressed. Ms. Fosse has been teaching first grade for 15 years.

The Integrated Child

Faye has been labeled "educable mentally retarded". She is Caucasian, of average height and weight, fair skin and shoulder length light brown hair which is curled on the ends and drawn back from her face. Faye has the characteristics associated with Down's Syndrome.[1] Faye wears typical clothing jeans, shirt, sneakers. She carries a lunch box and has and uses a locker in the hallway. Faye is not as articulate as the other children in the class. She sounds more childish than the others, speaking less clearly, using shorter sentences with fewer words.

> (The class is sitting in a group in the back of the room. The children are telling about something of interest to them.) Ms. Fosse says, "Faye, do you have anything to share?" Faye replies, "No. I have some news." Her voice is low. Ms. Fosse says, "Some news? Okay, tell us your news." Faye says softly, "Jody play in my room. Jody play upstairs and downstairs." Ms. Fosse repeats this, then says, "Did you play with him?" Faye nods. Ms. Fosse asks, "Did you enjoy it?" Faye nods. Ms. Fosse says, "Do you feel better?" Faye nods.

Faye is officially enrolled in this first grade. She goes to resource class twice each day, once just before lunch (for about 15 minutes) and again in the early afternoon. She is in resource class a total of about one hour. Every day, just prior to her morning resource class, Faye has one-half hour of speech therapy. Faye attended kindergarten at Monroe, and prior to that, she received speech therapy on a regular basis at the school.

---

[1] Sarason and Doris (1969) report that "Down's Syndrome is typically characterized by a moderate to severe degree of intellectual defect" (p. 366). However, they also cite authorities such as Benda (1965) who suggest that many children with Down's Syndrome fall in the "educable" rather than "trainable" range of mental retardation, even though their speech and language are delayed. This latter description appears more fitting for Faye.

Other Children in the Class

In addition to Faye, there are 17 other children in this class, six girls and 11 boys. All are Caucasian. In general, the children are well-groomed and well-dressed, including appropriate outer garments for inclement winter weather. Many of the children walk to and from school.

Classroom and Seating Arrangements

This first grade classroom is rectangular with a gray tile floor. The walls are aqua. Much of the basic structure of the room is fixed--the chalkboards in front and back, the counter area, cabinets, and sink along the wall, the shelves and counter tops along the opposite wall. The decorations consist of the alphabet, a color chart, name cards on most every object, e.g., "shelf", "clock". The other decorations include a calendar, number chart, and a variety of other materials typical of classrooms.

The classroom is well-stocked with games, puzzles, clay, paint, and other learning materials. The round table in the front left-hand corner of the room is a "listening" area. There is a tape recorder in the center of the table, and six pairs of earphones connected to it. Several extra desks, located in various areas of the room, serve as work spaces for the particular areas, e.g., paint area, manipulative materials area. The number of spaces (i.e., desks or chairs) in these areas determines the number of children that can be there at any given time.

Each child is assigned a desk. All desks are movable, made of metal, and equipped with formica writing surfaces and open shelves directly below. The children's desks are arranged in six "tables". Each "table" consists of three desks side by side. The "tables" are arranged in rows, three on each side of the room. All desks face the front chalkboard.

The seating arrangement in this class underwent one major change and one minor change during the observation period. Figure 1 is a schematic drawing of the class showing placement of furniture as well as the seating arrangement in effect at the beginning of the observation period. Figure 2 indicates the arrangement at the close of the observation period. In both instances, the seating pattern consists of girls occupying the middle desks in each "table", and boys occupying desks on either side. Faye, however, in both setups, occupies an outer, center aisle desk in a middle "table". As will become evident, this arrangement is compatible with Ms. Fosse's way of relating to Faye, a style that fosters Faye's dependence on the teacher rather than her integration into the mainstream of class life.

Organization and Activities

Seating arrangements are made by the teacher primarily on the basis of children's behavior and interactions. In some instances, children are placed together if one child is seen by the teacher as being a "good model" for the other or able to help the other. Children are separated if they are not getting along or if too tightly knit groups are beginning to form. In general, however, the pattern remained, girls in the middle seats, with the exception of Faye, and boys in the outer seats at each "table".

Reading and mathematics receive major emphasis. There are three reading groups, "Thunderbirds", "Jets", and "Stormtroopers", which meet with the teacher each day in a small area in the back of the room. These groups represent skill levels. In addition to formal reading groups, the children complete assignments in phonics, sound recognition, sentence writing. Mathematics is usually taught to the class in the afternoons, although frequently the children have a math related assignment to complete during the morning. "Special" classes, such as art, music, gym, and library,

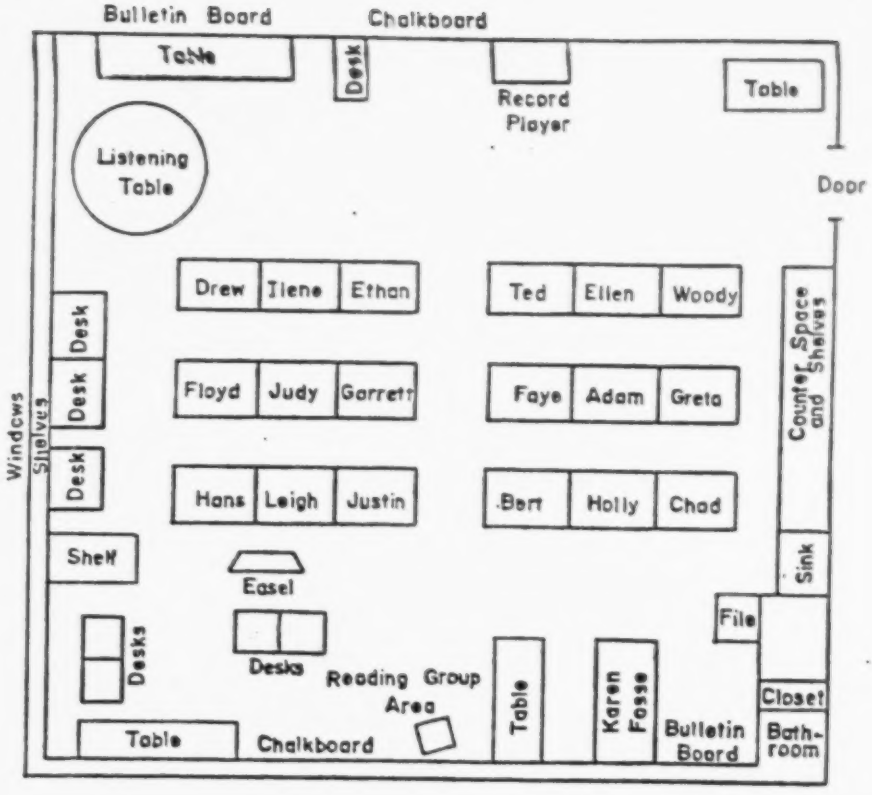

Figure 1 A schematic drawing of the first grade classroom at Monroe Elementary School (beginning of Phase 2).

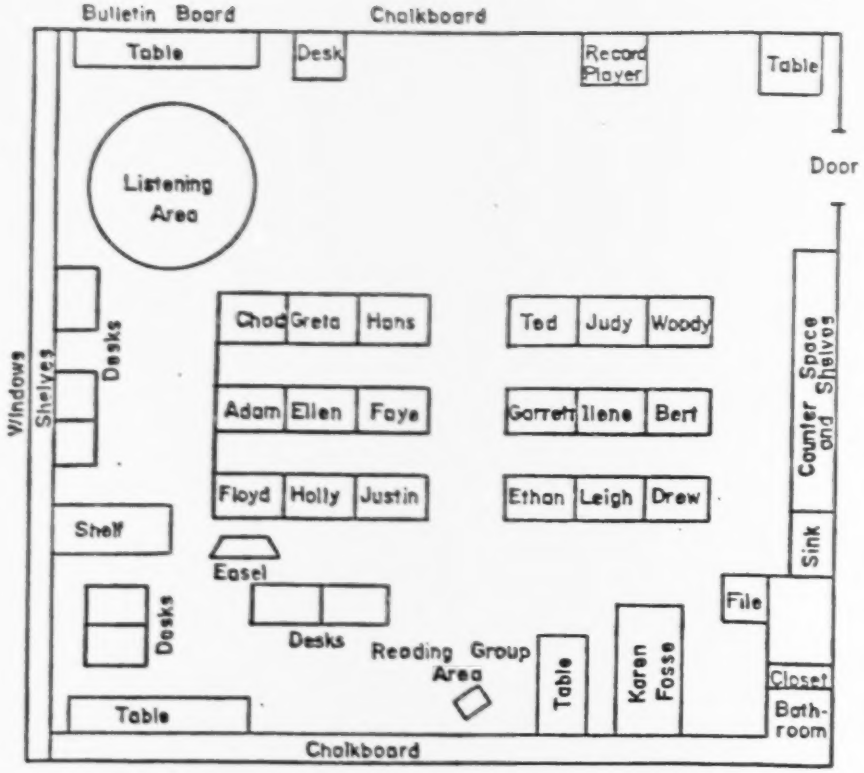

Figure 2 A schematic drawing of the first grade classroom at Monroe Elementary School (end of Phase 2).

are scheduled at various times during the day.

The general daily routine is as follows. Children arrive at about 9:00 and begin to settle down in their seats. The teacher calls for lunch orders. Then, the class recites the Pledge of Allegiance and sings a patriotic song. Afterwards, the teacher directs the children in reviewing the date, weather, and "special" class scheduled for the day. The teacher gives instructions for the morning's work, then the assignments begin. Shortly afterwards, the first reading group is called.

During the morning, Ms. Irma Gardner, the perceptual teacher, brings a cart of materials into the classroom and works with several children on the floor in the front of the room. Ms. Gardner is a short, heavy-set Caucasian woman of about 40 years. She has dark brown hair, wears glasses, and dresses neatly. She conducts a special perceptual program, funded through a federal employment grant. All first graders participate in this program.

When the children complete their assignments, they place their papers in metal trays on the counter near the sink. They are then permitted to do activities at various stations around the room. The morning's activities are, therefore, reading groups, perceptual work, individual work, and whatever "special" class might be offered.

Lunch is at 11:45 in the classroom. Ms. Mary Engel, a lunch aide, monitors and assists the children during this time. Ms. Engel is a Caucasian woman of average height and weight, about 55 years of age. She has short gray hair, dresses casually, and speaks clearly. Ms. Engel helps the children get their lunches ready, when needed, and reads them a story while they eat.

At about 12:30 Ms. Fosse returns to the classroom and the children have playtime until 1:15 or 1:30. The major afternoon activity is mathematics, with other teacher-directed events, such as reading a story or sharing verbally. Interspersed throughout the day are non-boisterous physical activities such as games and exercise led by Ms. Fosse. The children are dismissed around 3:00.

Faye is present in the classroom during most of the day and completes worksheets given to her by the teacher. These are usually different from those of her classmates, except when the worksheet is a crafts project or simple exercise. Faye occasionally joins the "Thunderbirds" reading group for letter/sound recognition or an activity at the "listening table".

Teacher Influence and Interaction

Karen Fosse is the focal point of her classroom, the primary source of information, instruction, learning, and activity. She is organized and highly directive. In addition to determining the environmental arrangements and the children's seating arrangements, Ms. Fosse controls the specific content and pace of each day. For example, she signals the start of each day's events, leads the children in all the large group activities, including games as well as lessons, prepares and presents the daily assignments, selects and arranges materials throughout the classroom, and conducts all the reading groups.

Ms. Fosse keeps a close watch over her students throughout the day. Even while she is conducting a reading group in the back of the room, she faces out to the rest of the class and continues to monitor them, frequently calling to particular children, to remind them to continue working. Ms. Fosse checks the children's work, gives help when needed, and responds to children's behaviors, requests, questions and activities.

Karen Fosse selects children to perform a variety of tasks that appear to have high status in the classroom. For example, each morning she selects one student to be the "messenger" who carries the attendance report and lunch orders to the office. Other such high-status activities include turning off the tape recorder after one's group has finished at the "listening table", distributing materials to the class, passing out corrected papers. Very often, being selected to perform one of these high-status activities is a reward for desired behavior. With her back to the class, for example, the teacher says, "I'm looking for some children to be helpers. I wonder if I'll find anybody." The children immediately become silent, sit straight in their chairs, facing front, with their hands folded on their desks. The teacher then praises this behavior and selects students.

Karen Fosse's style of organization, management, teaching, and communication clearly establishes her forceful presence and influence in her classroom. The children follow her direction, carry out her instructions, and generally meet her expectations with minimal negative sanction required.

Karen Fosse holds specific expectations of her students, as evidenced in both the classroom arrangements and her interactions with the children. Many of these expectations involve management, discipline, and school work issues. The children are expected to abide by the rules. For example, the number of seats available in any particular activity area of the room determines the maximum number of children permitted to be there at any one time, and only after all assignments are completed. The children are expected to work independently, neatly, and completely. School work, i.e., assignments, reading groups, and lessons, clearly takes precedence over play and even over supplemental work with materials around the room.

Karen Fosse also has well-defined expectations for her students' peer interrelationships. Although one overall goal seems to be for the students to become self-reliant and independent, other goals are to be able to seek help from and give assistance to each other when needed; to refrain from interfering with each other's endeavors; to respect each other's belongings, roles, and duties; and to enjoy each other's company. Many of her interactions with various children concern one or another of these goals.

> Kurt comes in and walks over to the desks by the windows. Adam calls to him immediately, "Sit next to me today." Kurt says, "Okay." To Ms. Fosse, Adam says, "Look, Kurt's sitting next to me." He sounds excited. Ms. Fosse answers, "That's okay."

> Karen Fosse walks over to Hans from her spot in the back of the room. She bends down to him, putting her arm around his shoulder. She speaks softly. Ms. Fosse says, "You have a choice. Either you do your work and stop disturbing others or I'll have to put you in an isolation booth." She points to a table behind the open classroom door. Ms. Fosse walks over to the door and turns the number chart so it is easily seen from Hans' position. She returns to Hans and says, "You decide." Hans faces his desk, lowers his head and shoulders, and begins writing on his paper.

Karen Fosse's expectations hold consistently for all her students except one, Faye. Frequently and in important ways, the expectations for Faye's abilities, behavior, and her relations with her peers are discrepant with what appear to be major goals.

Considerable emphasis is placed on peer help-seeking and -giving as a means of learning. There is no stigma attached to needing help, and the children are encouraged to use each other and the adult(s) in the classroom on such occasions. The expectation is that the children will know when they need assistance and be able to get it.

Ms. Fosse calls to the children from her desk, "Check your shoelaces. If you need help tying your shoes, ask your neighbor." She immediately leaves her desk, walks quickly over to Faye, and ties her shoelaces for her.

Ms. Engel (the lunch aide) enters the classroom while the children are bringing in their lunches. Faye carries her lunch pail to her desk and sets its contents on her desk top. Ms. Engel goes immediately over to Faye and, without saying anything, opens her thermoses for her. She then calls to the other children, "Anyone need help?"

(Several children, including Faye, are working on projects involving cutting, folding, and pasting to make elves.) Adam carries his elf body, which requires back and forth folding like a fan, to Chad for help. Chad folds the paper. Ms. Fosse calls from the back of the room, "Don't do it for him, Chad. Just show him how. Helping means just getting them started." Chad returns the paper to Adam who finishes folding it. He returns to his seat. Ms. Fosse calls from the back again, "Now, Adam, why don't you help Faye? Show her what Chad just showed you." Adam approaches Faye. Faye continues to cut, while sitting on Ellen's desk. She does not offer her paper for help. Ms. Fosse says, "Faye, do you want Adam to help you?" Faye shakes her head no. Ms. Fosse says, "You look like you need help. Adam needed help. Why don't you let him help you?" Faye nods. Adam takes Faye's paper and folds it once or twice. Most of the folding is done already. After a few seconds, Adam hands it back to Faye and says out loud, in a tone expressing some degree of surprise, "She did pretty well." There is no response.

(Six children, including Faye, are at the "listening table," wearing earphones and doing an activity.)
After the tape is over, the children remove the earphones and return to their desks. All of a sudden, Ms. Fosse jumps up from the group in the reading area, and races toward the round table, with a panicked look in her eyes. Faye is trying to get her hair out of the earphone wire. On her way to the "listening table," Ms. Fosse smiles and says, anxiously, "I thought she had it wrapped around her neck." She frees Faye, re-curls her hair twisting it in her fingers, and returns to the reading group. Faye returns to her desk.

These few incidents suggest different expectations for Faye as opposed to her peers. Unlike the other children, Faye is seen as usually needing help and incapable of working out problems herself or calling for help when she needs it. In addition, she is excluded from the general maxim about neighboring assistance.

Karen Fosse speaks to her students clearly and with an even tone of voice. She does not scream. Her manner of speaking conveys the message that her students can and do understand, and will meet her expectations. With Faye, however, the situation is somewhat different. Ms. Fosse frequently gives detailed explanations or statements when speaking to Faye about a variety of things, including rules, assignments, lessons, activities. Her tone of voice in these instances is high-pitched and singsong. Except on rare occasions, Faye is not required to respond verbally, and usually she does not even respond gesturally.

Respect for each other and for each other's belongings, work, and duties clearly receives a major focus in this class. The children are encouraged through instruction, praise, and occasional reprimand to be polite to each other, to take turns, and to be proud of each other's good work. Even minor infractions are dealt with as illustrated in the following example.

> (Six children, Hans, Leigh, Ellen, Floyd, Garrett, and Judy, are sent to the "listening table" for an activity. Karen Fosse selects Leigh to turn the tape recorder on and to shut it off.) The children at the listening table take off their earphones. There is a bit of a scuffle as Hans shuts off the machine while Leigh is also trying to shut it off. Ms. Fosse calls from the back of the room, "Hans, what is the problem?" Hans says, "I was trying to shut it off." Ms. Fosse replies, "Who is supposed to shut it off?" Hans answers, "Leigh." Ms. Fosse says, "Well, don't you have something to say to someone?" Hans turns to Leigh and says, "I'm sorry." The children return to their desks.

This kind of teacher-child interchange is common. However, it is significantly different from the type of interchange that occurs when Faye is involved, as evidenced most poignantly in instances where Faye appears to display behavior described by her teacher as "sticky fingers".

(Faye and Ellen are sitting at their desks, adjacent to each other. Ms. Fosse is with a reading group in the back of the room.) Ellen reaches for some crayons on Faye's desk. Faye pushes Ellen's hand away. Ellen frowns at Faye. After a short while, Faye reaches for the paper and crayons on Ellen's desk. Ellen pushes Faye's hand away and frowns at her. Faye touches again. Ellen's expression indicates growing annoyance. She looks back to Ms. Fosse who is working with the reading group. Ms. Fosse does not notice and does not respond to Ellen's look. Ellen turns back to Faye and says, "Faye, don't touch any of my stuff." Faye smiles broadly, does not look up from her paper, and continues writing. Ms. Fosse calls the reading group to which Ellen belongs. Ellen goes to the back of the room and stands at the table in the back looking at Faye. Faye looks back at Ellen and smiles. Ellen frowns. Ellen takes a place on a rug remnant on the floor in the middle of the back row. She looks back at Faye. Faye is facing front, smiling, Ms. Fosse then calls Faye to join the group for "sounds". When the opening sound recognition exercise is finished, Ms. Fosse says, "Okay, Faye. Go back to your desk." Faye gets up and walks back to her desk. Ellen says, "And don't touch my stuff." It is a brisk, unemotional order. Ms. Fosse smiles at Ellen, and says in a soft reprimand, "Now, you lend her your crayons sometimes."

The victim of Faye's "sticky fingers" receives the reprimand in this instance rather than Faye, and Ellen continues to be concerned about her lost materials which she apparently frequently finds in or on Faye's desk.

Ellen returns from her reading group to her desk and looks around. She looks on Faye's desk, then settles into her work. She talks with Chad, who sits in front of her, about Faye. Ellen is frowning. Ellen says, "She steals my crayons." Chad replies, "Put them on the other side of your desk." Ellen: "I did. She still steals them." Chad: "Then tell the teacher." Ellen: "I did." Chad shrugs his shoulders and turns around to his desk. Ellen shakes her head, frowning, and continues her work.

Despite her statement about Faye's having "sticky fingers", Ms. Fosse seems not to give much support to Ellen, the apparent victim of this behavior. Evidently, all of this is very disturbing to Ellen who seems to have exhausted the acceptable solutions.

Faye's "stealing" is not only ignored and thus tolerated; it is also on occasion rewarded, by the supervising adult.

> (It is lunchtime. Ms. Engel is in the classroom.) Ellen stands next to Faye's desk, with her hands on her hips. She says in an annoyed tone, "Faye!" Faye is drinking out of her thermos. She does not look at Ellen. Ellen sits down, frowning. Ms. Engel walks over to the two girls and says, "What's the matter?" Ellen says, "Faye stole my cupcake." Greta turns around and nods, saying, "Faye stole her cupcake." There is a chocolate cupcake on Faye's desk. Ms. Engel asks Faye, "Faye, did you bring this cupcake from home?" Faye nods her head, while she is drinking from her thermos. Simultaneously, Ellen and Greta say, "No, she didn't." Ellen repeats, "It's mine." Ms. Engel picks up the cupcake and starts to place it on Ellen's desk. Ellen holds up her hand and says angrily, "I don't want it after she ate it." Ms. Engel returns the cupcake to Faye. No other words are spoken. Faye eats the cupcake.

Although there is some doubt that Faye is involved in stealing as often as Ellen accuses her of it, there are standards of behavior for Faye that are distinctly different from those for the rest of the class. The children (including Faye) are aware of this, especailly when they observe a child scolded for turning off the tape recorder in another's place, and Faye allowed to retain another's belongings which she has taken. This kind of double standard mitigates against Faye's being accepted by her peers and experiencing positive social interactions.

Karen Fosse is a warm and sensitive teacher who wants the best for all of her students. She expresses concern about Faye, and whether or not Faye would be "better off" someplace else, "with children she feels comfortable with and can communicate with." On one occasion, Ms. Fosse told the researcher that she had spoken to the class about Faye one time when Faye was out of the room.

> (Karen Fosse said,) "I assumed that the children knew about Faye when they all started, but they didn't. Nobody has ever explained about Faye. I described to the children that Faye had some problems with learning and speaking, but that I wanted them all to treat Faye as a part of the class, just as they do each other. And to help her."

These verbal instructions, however, are not entirely consistent with the reality of the situation. The very existence of a double standard of behavior, however well-intended, as well as Faye's not being a recognized member of any group in the class, are clear obstacles to her being regraded and treated as a bona fide part of the class or as a real peer. Furthermore, helping, in the sense that peer help is valued and encouraged, is impossible with Faye because the adults in the setting rush to provide her with the kinds of assistance that the children are expected to seek from and give to each other. With regard to Faye, the children are expected to "be kind to her."

According to Karen Fosse, Faye is in this first grade for "socialization" understood to mean "interacting" with the other children. In reference to Faye and the other children, Ms. Fosse expresses her wish to "see more interaction initiated on both sides." Yet, virtually no opportunities are provided for positive social interactions which include Faye.

Although as a routine, Faye participates in the general movement and activity of the class, her direct (and indirect) contacts with the adults in the setting frequently affirm that she is very different from the other children. This affirmation appears to be well understood by the children themselves, and may, indeed, account for the nature and quality of Faye's peer experiences.

Peer Interactions

In general, the children in this first grade class interact with each other frequently throughout the day in a wide variety of circumstances. The style and content of these interactions underscore their richness and diversity.

Children exchange greetings and pleasantries.

> Hans enters the room, walks to his desk, then to Ellen's in the row behind him. He leans on Ellen's desk, looking at her paper. She continues writing, looks up at him, and smiles.
>
> On line outside the gym, Justin, Ethan and Drew are talking together. Justin turns to Ethan and says, "You're a pretty smart kid."

Kurt, who joins this class for lunch, enters the classroom. Adams calls to him immediately, "Sit next to me today." Kurt says, "Okay." Adam gets up and says, "I'll help you with the desk." Together, they move a desk next to Adam's desk.

They seek and provide information or assistance.

(Karen Fosse asks Leigh to close the classroom door. After several unsuccessful attempts, Leigh approaches Woody, whose seat is closest to the door.) With her finger in her mouth, she says, "Woody, how do you close the door?" Her tone is high-pitched and soft. Woody gets up from his desk, walks to the door, steps on the flat lever just underneath the cylinder, and the door swings shut. Leigh watches, with her finger in her mouth. When the door closes, Woody turns, looks at Leigh, and goes back to his seat. Leigh watches until the door is fully closed. Then, she turns and walks back to her desk. She sits down and continues working.

(Adam discovers that he has made an error when called to the chalkboard during a lesson.) He whispers to Ethan sitting behind him, "Why didn't you tell me?" Ethan whispers back, "I did."

The assignment is to write each of several words listed on the board in a sentence. Judy helps the two boys on either side of her (Floyd and Garrett) sound out the letters of the words they want to write.

On occasion, the children approach each other to borrow something, or they share materials.

Ted walks over to Ilene's desk. He asks her, "Can I have some Elmer's glue?" Ilene looks at him and nods. She reaches into her desk, pulls out her egg carton container and hands Ted her small bottle of Elmer's glue. Ted says, "Thanks". He walks back to his desk.

Ethan says to Ellen, "Do you have a black crayon?" Ellen replies, "Yes. In my desk. Put it back." She returns to the group in the back of the room.

Holly and Ellen are both washing their desks. Holly looks at Ellen, her eyes open wide. She says excitedly, "Do you want to trade sponges?" Ellen looks at the sponge in her hand, then she holds it out to Holly. Floyd watches them, twirling his pencil in his fingers.

Frequently, the children talk about their school work or an activity they are doing, or things in general.

> While Greta washes her desk, Chad, who sits next to her, says, "Greta, I'm getting really good at that last paper. Because c starts my first name and my last name. That was a c paper." Chad is smiling. Greta smiles at him as she continues to wash her desk.
>
> (Ethan returns to his desk after reading group. He has a new reading book.) Ellen says, "Adam's not in a book yet. They're not in a book yet." Adam, sitting at his desk, shakes his head. Ellen continues, "We're in Chug Chug." Ethan replies, "We're in Yes Yes." Ethan opens his book to the first page. He looks down a list of the books on the inside of the front cover. He finds "Yes Yes." Ethan says, "That's number 17. We only have three more." Then he looks up the list and locates "Chug Chug." He says, "Chug Chug is number 7." Ellen nods.
>
> Ellen, Ethan, and Holly are talking about the birds they see in their yards. Ellen says, "We feed them bird seeds." Ethan says, "That must be what they grow out of." He laughs heartily. Ellen and Holly laugh too.
>
> Ethan, Justin, and Bert are standing next to Drew. They are talking about eating clay. Ethan says, "I ate clay." Justin says, "Here, eat some now." Ethan replies, "No, I got sick." His voice elevates in pitch. They all laugh.

During playtime each day, the children engage in a variety of activities including painting and other crafts, doing puzzles, playing checkers and other games, and playing with toys they bring from home. Throughout this period, they interact with each other freely, discussing a broad range of topics, such as the rules, strategies, and roles of the games they are playing, what they are building or creating, what is going on at home, and so forth.

For the most part, peer interactions in this class are positive. On occasion, however, a few of the children participate in more negative encounters.

Ellen begins to wash her desk. Floyd, sitting in the row behind her, says, "Can I borrow your yellow to do all this?" He points to his paper. Ellen replies, sharply, "No. I'm not sharing. And you can't have Holly's either. She only shares with me and Ilene."

Hans stands in front of Holly's desk and says to her, "Holly, I'm all done." There is excitement in his voice. Ellen, who is just sitting down at her desk, directly in front of Holly's, says, sternly, making a face, "So what, Hans?" She sits down. Holly does not say anything.

Overall, the children in this class are involved on a consistent basis in social interaction with their classmates. However, even though Faye spends most of each school day with the class, she is not a part of the "social life" of the class, and her interactions with her classmates are significantly different from their interactions with each other.

The observations indicate that Faye typically spends a very small percentage of her time in direct contact with other children. With the exception of one child, Leigh, who was described by her teacher as "withdrawn", Faye's classmates spend very high percentages of time in contact with each other. Even Garrett, a child who is described by the teacher as "very quiet", experiences substantially higher levels of peer involvement than does Faye, thus suggesting that her experience is indeed atypical for this setting.

Although Faye is with this class for most of the day and moves freely around the classroom, she spends much of her time alone. She completes her few assignments, and then chooses successive activities from various places around the classroom, working on each for short periods of time. Faye leaves the class regularly in the morning and the afternoon for her scheduled speech and resource programs. Ms. Fosse reminds Faye each day when it is time for her to go. Faye appears content yet does not object to leaving the class. Her leaving, however, occasionally deprives her of positive group experiences.

(After gym class, the children stand on line against the wall, awaiting Ms. Fosse.) Ms. Fosse stops at the head of the children's line. She looks down the line and says, "Faye, go to mrs. Hunt." Faye looks up. She does not move. Ms. Fosse starts to take a step toward Faye. She says again, a bit louder, "Faye, go to Mrs. Hunt." Ms. Fosse gestures, pointing to Faye and then in the direction of the teacher's room. The speech room is in the same area as the nurse and the teachers' room. At the same time, the girl who is standing behind Faye starts to take a step toward Faye. A moment later, Faye leaves the line and starts walking down the hallway toward the speech room. Ms. Fosse turns to the other children standing on line. In a pleasant voice, she says, "How nicely you're standing. I didn't even know you were here. I'll bet you can go all the way to our classroom like that. Let's see if you can. Okay, Leigh." Faye is absent for this compliment. The children are smiling while Ms. Fosse speaks to them.

Faye watches the other children now and then, and occasionally attempts to interact with them by teasing or playing tricks. She is not always successful.

Floyd is in the hallway. Faye gets up and pushes his desk and chair far away from his row. She sits back in her seat and watches the door. Holly walks back from the wastebasket, and moves Floyd's desk and chair back. She and Faye do not look or speak to each other.

There seems to be considerable curiosity about Faye among the other children in her class. Although they do not ask questions directly, the children frequently stare at her, particularly at her face. Because no questions are asked openly, it is difficult to ascertain the precise nature of her classmates' curiosity. However, the staring phenomenon is a reasonable indication that curiosity does exist. In addition, Faye is, on occasion, the topic of secret conversation.

Faye is sitting at her desk. Justin is near the window, putting something in a large plastic bag which is on the floor. Chad is standing near his desk, talking softly to Justin. Floyd is standing against the window shelf, near both Chad and Justin. As I move closer, I hear Chad say, "She's retarded." His tone is straightforward and descriptive, although he is whispering. Floyd stares at Faye. Chad looks at her over his shoulder and Justin

> glances over. I place my chair next to the movable shelf near the windows. I nonchalantly glance around the room. The boys stop talking and Floyd and Justin return to their seats.

Despite the curiosity and the occasional talking about her, Faye is usually uninvolved with her peers. She seldom initiates interactions of any kind with the majority of children, and she rarely communicates verbally with them, even when asked a question directly.

> (Faye has just finished saying that her brother played a game in her room. It is "sharing time". The children sit in a group.) Hans asks Faye, "What was he playing?" There is no answer. Afterwards, Ms. Fosse says, "I'm sorry Hans. You asked Faye a question and I didn't give her a chance to answer." Hans asks again, "What game was Jody playing?" Ms. Fosse repeats Hans' question to Faye. Faye says something. It is inaudible. Ms. Fosse does not elaborate.

Karen Fosse describes Faye as "doing a little better than before" but "still not communicating very well."

> Ms. Fosse says, "Well, she's very difficult to understand. She doesn't really initiate any conversation. She might be playing with someone and they're working together but they don't talk. She smiles all the time. Her talking is mostly one word or two words. Except when it's about her family. The other kids get tired of that."

When Faye does initiate verbalizations, they are usually directed to an adult, particularly Ms. Fosse, but frequently are unrelated to the topic under consideration.

> (Ms. Fosse instructs the children concerning the morning's assignments.) Ms. Fosse starts walking toward the counter on the door side of the room. Faye raises her hand. Ms. Fosse stops near the door, looks at Faye, and says, "Yes, Faye." In a very unclear voice, Faye says, "It Jody birthday." Ms. Fosse says, "It's Jody's birthday? Oh, he must be very happy. Is he 5 or 6?" Faye says, "Five." Ms. Fosse nods. Faye smiles. Greta turns around and stares at Faye.

Even with adults, however, Faye sometimes avoids verbal interactions.

> Ms. Fosse then walks to the front of the room where Faye is working on the floor. She is playing with a puzzle of a child's body. Ms. Fosse bends over and says to Faye, "What are you doing?" She smiles. There is no answer. Ms. Fosse repeats, "Faye, what is it going to be? A boy or a girl?" She pauses. Again, no audible answer. Ms. Fosse asks, "Where's the picture?" Faye takes a photograph of a boy out of the box and places it on the floor. Ms. Fosse walks to the round listening table.

Ms. Lynn Lacey, a soft-spoken, Caucasian woman of about 24 years, and the resource teacher in this school, describes Faye as being highly distressed about her verbal difficulties.

> "This year, she is more frustrated with school. She doesn't want to come. She won't get dressed in the morning. She's drawn back from her friends. She is aware, you know, that her speech isn't good. She's really struggling this year. Like when she came into my room, and I was asking her why she came at that time, she went out into the hall, to her locker, put on her coat and was ready to go home."

Faye, however, was not observed behaving in this manner during the research period.

The children in this class respond to Faye in a variety of ways, which for the most part are unlike the ways they interact with each other. With Faye, they do not exchange greetings or pleasantries, ask for or freely give assistance, share their materials, or discuss their school work and other matters--as they do with each other. Many children simply look at her and back away if she gets too close. This happens while the children are standing on line, during playtime, or during a class activity. Frequently, children seem unable or unwilling to communicate directly with Faye and require the teacher to do so for them.

(One of the assignments involves coloring, cutting, and pasting, in that order. Faye takes the worksheet, a blank sheet of paper, and a pair of scissors.) Ted is standing near her at the counter. As she takes these items, he says, "Faye." His tone of voice is high; he looks sternly at Faye. Faye returns to her seat. Ted follows her. Faye sits down. (Karen Fosse is nearby talking with another child.) Ted stops next to Faye's desk in the middle aisle. He looks from Faye to Ms. Fosse a few times. He has a worried look on his face. Ms. Fosse turns around, walks toward the center aisle, and stops next to Faye. She says calmly to Faye, "First color all the pictures before you cut." Ms. Fosse takes the scissors to the holder on the counter. Ted returns to his seat.

Faye also experiences more directly negative encounters with her classmates. These include such things as unpleasant facial expressions toward her, hitting, mocking, overt rejection, and other negative acts.

Holly goes to the counter, hands in one paper and takes another. She returns to her seat. She looks at Faye and makes a face (unpleasant) and sits down.

(Karen Fosse selects Faye to lead the girls' line.) Faye walks to the front of the room, then along the boys' line to the door. She stops there next to Hans. Hans looks at her oddly and leans away from her.

(Karen Fosse returns some papers to Faye, complimenting her work.) Faye shows Ellen, sitting next to her, the papers. Ellen makes faces at Faye. Faye turns back to her desk.

Hans stands behind Faye on line. He knees her in the behind. She turns around and looks at him, but does nothing. Floyd slaps her on the upper arm. She slaps him back. They exchange slaps once or twice more.

Ted and Holly are sitting on the floor near Ms. Gardner talking animatedly to each other as Ms. Gardner places materials from the cart onto the floor. Shortly, Faye returns. Ms. Gardner calls her immediately, before she sits at her desk. She goes to the small group in front. As soon as she nears, Holly scoots quickly closer to Ted and away from Faye, saying, "Yuck. I'm not going to sit there." Holly and Ted giggle together. Faye watches. Her expression is blank and she does not say anything.

Ellen sitting next to Faye, picks her nose, then wipes her finger on Faye's desk. Ellen looks around quickly. She then moves her desk a bit away from Faye's.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Ellen, primarily, and her friend, Holly, interact with Faye most consistently. Ellen occupies the desk adjacent to Faye's and Holly sits directly behind Ellen. The behavior of both girls toward Faye is characterized more by authoritativeness than by egalitarianism. Both attempt to direct her, control her, keep her in line.

> At about 12:00 p.m., Holly and Greta look at the clock, then over to Faye who is still eating her lunch. Holly says loudly and sternly, "Food, out." She points toward the door. Greta stands with her looking at Faye.
>
> Ellen is chosen with another girl to push the tray cart to the cafeteria. Just before she leaves, she says, "Don't let her touch my desk." She is talking to Holly in a firm, almost bitter tone. When Ellen returns from pushing the cart, the first thing she does is ask Holly, "Did Faye touch my desk?" Holly replies, "No", and shakes her head.
>
> On the way back to her desk, Faye walks past Floyd's desk and touches the elf he has made. Floyd is in the "Thunderbirds" reading group, now in session. Holly, who is sitting next to Floyd's desk, frowns at Faye, grabs Floyd's elf and says sternly, "Don't touch."

Faye is not always a passive bystander in these encounters. Her reputation for having "sticky fingers" and Ellen's belongings being frequently the target have not facilitated the development of a trusting, equal relationship. Frequently, however, Faye pursues Ellen, without much success.

> Faye sits down on the floor near Ellen. Ellen pushes herself backwards away from the group.
>
> Ellen is moving her desk away from Faye's toward Adam's. Faye follows Ellen's movements, by moving her own desk in the same way.
>
> Ellen gets up and moves Adam's desk closer to the window. Then she moves her own next to his. Both are moved away from Faye.. While Ellen is moving her own desk, the markers drop onto the floor. Ellen gets up and walks around to the other side of her desk. She picks up the markers. While she is there, Faye moves her own desk closer and next to Ellen's. Ellen sits down at her desk and continues working.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

When the observer reported to the teacher that Ellen and Holly interact with Faye more than the other children do, and that their interactions consist mainly of sanctioning her or giving her instructions or directions, Ms. Fosse nodded her head and replied, "They think they are helping her. Now, Judy and Leigh play with her." However, on no occasion were either Judy or Leigh observed playing with Faye.

In fact, on only one occasion was Faye observed actually playing with any other child. Justin and Faye were "water painting" over each other's chalk drawings on a slate easel near the back of the classroom. This activity, however, was abruptly interrupted when Faye was told to leave the classroom for speech.

Karen Fosse reported only one other incident where a child, Bert, attempted to relate to Faye in a play activity. According to Ms. Fosse, Faye and Bert were sitting at the puzzle table in the back of the room. Bert tried to engage Faye in a conversation about what each of them was doing, but was unsuccessful. "She gave him no response at all. Not one word or anything. And Bert has always been very kind to her."

Discussion

There is no doubt that Karen Fosse is strongly concerned about Faye--about her interactions with the other children, her abilities to communicate with them, and the appropriateness of her even being with this class. This concern, however, seems to be expressed in two characteristic and somewhat conflicting ways. On the one hand, Karen Fosse and, indeed, Mary Engel, the lunch aide, are overprotective of Faye, hurrying to do for her what she can do for herself or could ask a peer to do, and to excuse, in subtle ways, important deviations from standard rules of behavior. On the other hand, Faye's success with

her peers seems to be left entirely up to her. Karen Fosse herself wonders if Faye should be in this group if she is unable to communicate with her peers. Little specific intervention is offered to facilitate positive interactions with Faye. The only possible exception is the discussion about Faye in her absence which was reported by the teacher. It is difficult to determine the result of this discussion, since no change in the children's behavior was noted by the observer.

Several features of Faye's peer interactions are of note. The most striking feature is the limited extent to which she is involved with her peers in contrast with their own peer interrelationships. Of the five children selected at random to serve as a contrast group, only one child (Leigh) experienced peer encounters at a level similar to Faye's. This child, however, was described by Karen Fosse as "withdrawn," thus highlighting the atypical nature of Faye's experience.

Of the 17 other children in this first grade, two, Ellen and Holly, interacted with Faye most often. Their interactions with her, however, were not as peers, but as disciplinarians or persons in authority. The rest of the children, for the most part, seem to have chosen to ignore or tolerate her presence and behavior. It is difficult to pinpoint precisely why these forms of relating to Faye characterize the children in this class. It is not unreasonable, however, to postulate that both the direct and indirect behaviors of the adults toward Faye regulate, to a large extent, how the children relate to her, and how she behaves generally and toward her peers. No particular behaviors on the part of the other children toward Faye are either rewarded or sanctioned by the adults (or by Faye herself). All behaviors seem to be treated with equal acceptance. And, since Faye is not expected to meet the general behavioral standards of the class (including the

ability to communicate effectively), the children have limited options: they can ignore or tolerate her, or they can assume the adult role of exercising control to keep her in line, or, as happened once or twice, they can try to engage her in play activity. Each choice has its own frustrations. None is truly successful.